

ARTWRIT

08. BARTON SLOANE ON "GELITIN" AT GREENE NAFTALI

1. FACTS DISTRIBUTED BY THE ARTISTS (AN OFFICIAL GALLERY DOCUMENT COLLOQUIALLY KNOWN AS A "PRESS RELEASE")

For their exhibition at Greene Naftali, Gelitin will transform the gallery into a podium.
Gelitin will build a big sculpture.

At the opening they will be working all evening on the sculpture.

The following 10 days they will be working on the sculpture in the afternoons, early evenings.

The visitors can watch the happening of the sculpture.

Gelitin will be working on the sculpture blindfolded.

Working blindfolded is never a sensation, it is just a fact.

They will never see the sculpture until it is finished.

The sculpture will stay for the rest of the show.

Gelitin will be assisted by very very professional assistants who hand them ideas, nails, tape, glue, conversation, things, guide them to the ladder and hold the scaffolding.

2. FACT STATED BY THE AUTHOR OF THE DOCUMENT WHICH FOLLOWS THIS STATEMENT

Gelitin is fucking crazy.

/// And I do mean that... In fact I can't think of a way to start this review except to say it outright. Recall that this is the collective of four Austrian bad-boys (Wolfgang Gantner, Ali Janka, Florian Reither and Tobias Urban) who may or may not have (quasi-clandestinely) removed a window from the 91st story of the World Trade Center only to have their photograph taken by helicopter (a stunt that would later be surreptitiously appropriated by various conspiracy theorists, oddly enough). These are four men whose primary media and themes can probably be summed up as (in no particular order) urine, water, rebellion, saran wrap, lube, and stuffed animals.

I quote the text message i sent to a friend who bailed on me the night that Tony Conrad (with Jutta Koether & John Miller as XXX Macarena) provided musical accompaniment to the construction: dude yr missing the most amazing shitshow!!!

which is not to say a literal fecalphiliac mess, but something rather close to it (i.e., k8 hardy assisting a Gelitin member - so to speak - into a bottle in order to better capture his piss, for one). While - assumedly - the very process of creating a sculpture blindfolded would produce results which lean toward the informal, gelitin's aesthetic sensibilities alone would generally be enough to guarantee such an characteristically scatological display. Which is not to say that the work is wholly abject and base, but that it is primal in its childish whimsicality and play: dangerously bright and messy with a shit-eating grin to boot.

Of course, by "shitshow" I also meant something like "raw spectacle." For one, because - like all good trainwrecks - the performance/process/sort-of-happening is a disaster you can't pull your eyes away from. After all, what are the bleachers there for, anyway? Embrace your perversity, Gelitin coos, Watch More... Watch Harder...

The other half of the spectacle involves those "very very professional assistants" the Austrians speak so fondly of, a list which comprises a veritable who's-who of you-know-what. I am rather loathe to have to cite the creme-de-la-creme of this list, but i would be critically remiss in neglecting to do so. Try this on for size: Urs Fischer, Liam Gillick, Andrew WK, Tom Sachs, Agathe Snow, Slava Mogutin, David LaChapelle... the list goes on.

The resulting performance(s) were Something like a happening, Something like Paul McCarthy, Something like Jason Rhodes, Something like a Good Party, Something like a Very Bad Party, Something like Meat-Joy-sans-Meat albeit ramped the fuck up with an ample dosages of ritalin, whiskey, ecstasy, day glo and teddy bears. Which is to say: very awesome, very cool, and very fucking crazy.

“GELITIN”
GREENE NAFTALI, NEW YORK CITY
508 West 26th Street, 8th Floor
January 28 - February 27



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